

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY GABORONE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090982

FOL GABORONE 0872 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAPETOWN DARESSALAAM
LUSAKA MAPUTO MOSCOW PEKING PRETORIA USUN MAR 29 1978 REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0872

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH SF BC CH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: PRC AMBASSADOR EXPRESSES FEAR OF CUBAN
INTERVENTION

1. AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION MARCH 24, PRC AMBASSADOR CHAO
CHENG-YI PULLED DCM ASIDE TO ASK HIM ABOUT DARESSALAAM
FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE WHICH HAD JUST BEEN ANNOUNCED
FOR MARCH 25-26. HE SAID HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT SOMETHING
POSITIVE WOULD COME FROM IT, THAT TIME WAS RUNNING OUT AND
THAT "SOMETHING MUST BE DONE SOON OR OTHER FORCES WILL
INTERVENE". HE HAD HEARD THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WOULD ALSO
BE IN DAR, AND URGED USG TO SEE TO IT THAT THE MEETING

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PRODUCED RESULTS. "YOU CAN DO IT", HE SAID,
"YOU HAVE THE POWER." (IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE
MEANT TO GET SMITH OR PF TO BE FLEXIBLE; PROBABLY HE
MEANT BOTH.)

2. DURING CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ' MARCH 27 TRIP TO
GABORONE, THE CONGRESSMAN HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

WITH AMBASSADOR CHAO AT THE AIRPORT DEPARTURE LOUNGE.
HE ASKED HIM INTER ALIA WHAT PRC ATTITUDE WOULD BE IN
THE EVENT OF CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN RHODESIA.
CHAO ASKED IF THAT WERE VERY LIKELY TO HAPPEN, TO WHICH
THE CONGRESSMAN REPLIED "NOT VERY LIKELY, BUT POSSIBLE".
VISIBLY REASSURED, CHAO SAID HE CERTAINLY HOPED IT
WOULD NOT OCCUR, AS CUBAN INTERVENTION WOULD VASTLY
COMPLICATE AN ALREADY COMPLEX SITUATION. CHAO ADDED
THAT HE BELIEVED THE FRONT LINE STATES WOULD NOT WANT
CUBAN TROOPS IN RHODESIA AND WOULD OPPOSE ANY SUCH
MOVE.

3. COMMENT. THE ABOVE EXPRESSION OF OPTIMISM (OR WISHFUL THINKING)
MAY BE AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT BY CHAO, IN LIGHT OF EXTAFF
MIN MOGWE'S REMARK EARLIER THAT DAY TO EFFECT THAT
GOB WOULD NOT OPPOSE CUBAN INTERVENTION IF SOUTH AFRICA
WENT INTO RHODESIA OR IF IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THERE WAS
NO OTHER WAY TO BRING DOWN THE SALISBURY (I.E., SMITH) REGIME.
NORLAND UNQUOTE VANCE

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